



CDC RESPONDS SERIES

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

The nation's public health system became first responders to the threat of bioterrorism resulting from the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. The system found itself pressed to respond to a new and emerging threat that did not reveal itself immediately. At the same time, CDC scientists needed to quickly update guidelines and recommendations to clinicians and those at risk for exposure. Public health scientists found that they needed to reach new audiences who had little experience and were spread across the country. This evolving information needed to be communicated with record numbers at record speed. The national public health system needs a way to respond to changes and updates to public health practice that affect national security.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

In response to this unprecedented demand for fast turnaround distance learning programs, the Public Health Training Network (PHTN) initiated a strategy using multiple technologies to reach the widest audience possible. This required mobilizing the resources of partners in state and local health agencies, federal agencies, private foundations, schools of public health, and clinical professional and affiliate organizations. Within days, the first program—*Anthrax, What Every Clinician Should Know*--aired to the largest audience in PHTN history. It was also the first program to have a simultaneous satellite broadcast, webcast, phone bridge, and subsequent web archive and free video tape availability. The series would continue with weekly programs updating the nation's clinical, laboratory and public health professionals on the most recent knowledge from CDC's top scientists. Ultimately, 10 programs aired to approximately 1.3 million people around the world. Access to all programs in the series is continuously available.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The series will continue to offer programs related to emerging threats to health, designed to help a wide range of constituents prepare to respond. CDC will continue to identify strategies to make rapid response to these threats timely and efficient. New partnerships have been developed out of this series which will address common strategies for increased access to distance learning programs by all professions called upon to protect the public's health. Infrastructure is being planned and built that will enable a sustained response to such an event in the future.

For information on this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/programs

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